

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-21 and 23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 6-11, 19-21 and 23 are amended, and claims 22 and 24 are canceled, without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Support for the amendments to claims 1, 19 and 21 can be found in the specification, for example, at page 16, lines 13-17. Support for the amendments to claims 14, 20 and 23 can be found in the specification, for example, at page 35 lines 14-21. Claims 6-11 are amended for form, and claims 21 and 23 are amended as requested in the Office Action. No new matter is added.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 4 contains allowable subject matter. However, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed below.

Claims 1 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

With regards to claim 1, the Examiner takes issue with the feature "each of at least one of the at least three relative density values." By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to recite "at least one of the at least three relative density values," to overcome the rejection.

With regards to claim 7, the Office Action indicates that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the feature "the threshold value." By this Amendment, claim 7 has been amended to recite "the higher threshold value," which has antecedent basis at least in claim 7. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 21-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. The rejection of claims 21 and 23 is respectfully traversed, and the rejection of canceled claims 22 and 24 is moot.

By this Amendment, claims 21 and 23 are amended to recite "[a] computer readable medium storing a computer program," as suggested by the Examiner. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 1-3 and 5-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Yamamoto (U.S. Patent No. 7,009,731). The rejection of claims 1-3, 5-21 and 23 is respectfully traversed, and the rejection of canceled claims 22 and 24 is moot.

Yamamoto does not teach or suggest the claimed features of independent claims 1, 14, 19-21 and 23. Yamamoto does not teach or suggest "when the corrected value is close to at least one of the at least three relative density values, [reducing] a frequency, at which the output value generation portion converts the corrected value into one multilevel output value," as recited in independent claim 1; or "reducing, when the corrected value is close to at least one of the at least three relative density values, a frequency, at which the corrected value is converted into one multilevel output value," as recited in independent claim 19; or "a program of reducing, when the corrected value is close to at least one of the at least three relative density values, a frequency, at which the corrected value is converted into one multilevel output value," as recited in independent claim 21.

Yamamoto does not disclose lowering the frequency at which the input value is converted to a multilevel output value when the input value is close to at least one of the three multilevel output values. Yamamoto merely relates to changing the method of calculating the correction value by modifying the threshold value when an input value is close to one of the multilevel output values (see col. 6, lines 1-19 of Yamamoto). Yamamoto has no disclosure of varying the frequency at which the correction calculation is performed based on the input value. Therefore, Yamamoto does not teach or suggest reducing a frequency at which the output value generation portion converts the corrected value into one multilevel output value

when the corrected value is close to at least one of the at least three relative density values, as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claims 19 and 21.

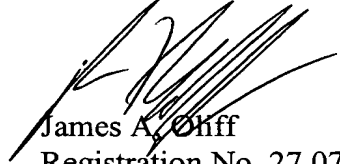
In addition, Yamamoto does not teach or suggest changing both threshold values such that "both the higher and lower threshold values are modified to become closer to each other when the input value becomes close to the middle relative density value," as recited in independent claim 14; "modifying, upon receipt of the input value, both the higher and lower threshold values in a manner that both the higher and lower threshold values become closer to each other when the input value becomes close to the middle relative density value," as recited in independent claim 20; or "a program of modifying, upon receipt of the input value, both the higher and lower threshold values in a manner that both the higher and lower threshold values become closer to each other when the input value becomes close to the middle relative density value," as recited in independent claim 23 (emphasis added).

Yamamoto merely relates to modifying a single threshold value when the input value becomes close the three multilevel output values indicating density (see col. 6, lines 1-19 of Yamamoto). Therefore, Yamamoto does not teach or suggest modifying both the higher and lower threshold values in a manner that both the higher and lower threshold values become closer to each other when the input value becomes close to the middle relative density value, as recited in independent claim 14, and as similarly recited in independent claims 20 and 23. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: May 16, 2008

Attachment: Petition for Extension of Time

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